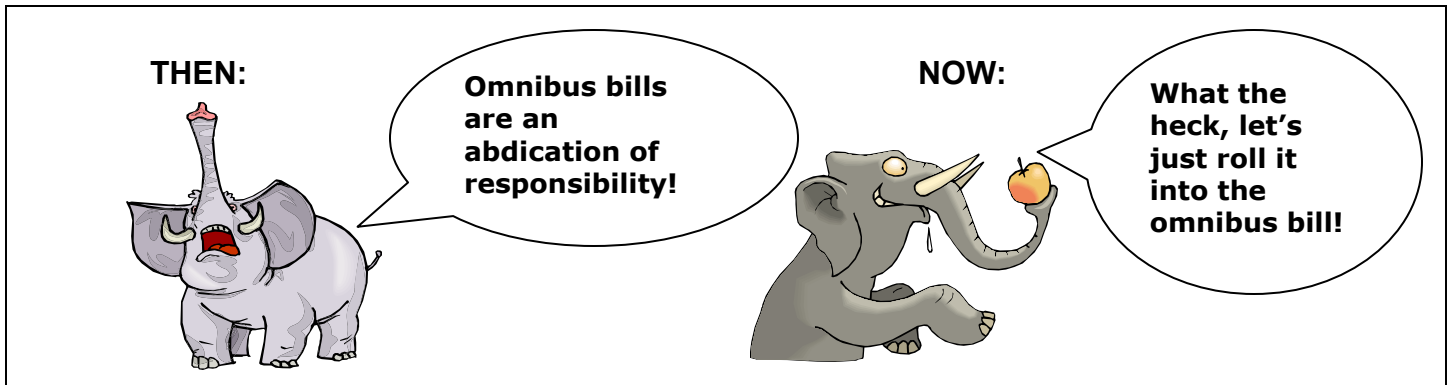


# **OMNIBUS BILLS: A MATTER OF CONVENIENCE FOR REPUBLICANS?**



## **Republicans Consistently Called Omnibus Appropriations Bills “Outrageous.” Now, They Start the Year with One and End the Year with Another!**

**And as a bonus they subvert the will of Congress and dump in controversial items that were rejected by both chambers of Congress: FCC Caps, School Vouchers, Changes to Overtime Regulations and more!**

### **What's Being Said About the FY 2004 Omnibus Appropriations Bill ...**

**"[An omnibus] is not even a good question. Nobody is thinking in those terms at all."**

- Majority Whip Tom DeLay [The Hill, 10/09/03]

**"I am very worried that Republicans have started just ignoring the impact of these spending bills, that the deficit is running up. It's going to take us quite some time now - years - to begin to ratchet it back down."**

- Sen. Trent Lott [ABC News, 11/30/03]

**"The Republican-led Congress is wallowing toward a garishly spectacular finale: a \$284 billion omnibus spending bill, a haphazardly stitched hulk that gives a bad name to the usual legislative metaphors about sausage-making and bauble-laden Christmas trees...The real pity, large as the omnibus bill itself, is that the full contents and damages will not be known for weeks, even by the lawmakers who vote for approval. If the old Congressional problem was gridlock, the new one is juggernaut."**

- New York Times Editorial [11/21/03]

**"The Republican Congress is turning into something of an embarrassment, if not a crackup."**

- Wall Street Journal Editorial [11/24/03]

**"Does anyone else notice a theme here? Elected in 1994 as the party of limited government, Republicans seem to have abandoned any effort to limit spending. Worse, the current Republican President has shown no inclination to control it either."**

- Wall Street Journal Editorial [11/25/03]

**"The House, operating under authoritarian rules and even more authoritarian leadership, passed all 13 appropriations bills this year on time. The Senate approved 12 - most of them in November - but conference reports on seven are still hanging fire, due to be passed in the omnibus. Time was - especially**

in the late 1980s and early 1990s - when Congress held individual debates on appropriations bills. Since 1994, this has happened only twice, in 1997 and 2001. Otherwise, catchalls - usually pork-laden - have been the rule.”

- Roll Call Editorial [12/01/03]

“This year was supposed to be different. This time around, with Republicans in charge of the House, Senate and White House, the annual appropriations bills were going to be completed...[T]his year's process -- and the substance of the measure it produced -- is more troubling than last year's model...This year's omnibus goes against the expressed will of both houses... [and has] become a vehicle for enacting policy changes not approved, or even debated, by either house. This take-it-or-leave-it behemoth isn't a healthy way to govern.”

- Washington Post Editorial [12/01/03]

“You would think that when the same party controls the White House and both houses of Congress you would get some legislative efficiencies. You would be wrong. Congress departed for Thanksgiving with seven spending bills covering 11 departments and dozens of agencies still outstanding... This year's [omnibus bill] is a monster -- \$373 billion to fund everything from crime fighting and veterans' health care to foreign aid and highway construction...This could well be the largest single spending bill Congress has ever passed. It will be a record of some kind -- but not a proud one.”

- Cincinnati Post Editorial [12/01/03]

“What Congress is supposed to do during the budget year is pass 13 individually considered spending bills for everything ranging from defense to education. But this year it managed to pass only six. The solution? Cram the remaining seven bills, which fund 11 of 15 Cabinet departments, into one big, ill-considered, \$328-billion sausage called an omnibus spending bill. The same irresponsible thing happened last year.”

- LA Times Editorial [12/02/03]

## **Are Republicans Hypocrites When it Comes to Omnibus Appropriations Bills?**

“I think that those of us who came here in 1995 as part of the crowd that was going to end these megabills, these omnibus spending bills, catch-all bills that were thrown in with all kinds of pork, all kinds of spending, this is a dishonest process. I lament that...We should be ashamed.”

- Rep. Randy Forbes (R-VA) [CR, 11/18/99]

“Mr. Speaker, every time we have one of these year-end omnibus appropriations bills, it always becomes sweetheart deal time.”

- Rep. John Duncan (R-TN) [CR, 11/17/03]

“Early in the process we were told that there was not going to be an omnibus ... everybody in this body knows it is wrong to have these omnibus bills where we throw almost everything into it. If anybody here can say with an honest expression on their face that they know what everything is in that bill, well, God save you. We know that there is a lot of stuff in that. We are going to read over the next several months about issues that are in the bill, and we are going to be embarrassed by it.”

- Rep. Gil Gutknecht (R-MN) [CR, 11/18/99]

“The omnibus bill for fiscal 2003 was made necessary by Congress' inability to reconcile last year's Republican House appropriations bills and their Democratic counterparts in the Senate. This bill, touted as evidence of how a Republican House can work with a Republican Senate, makes me long for the glory days of gridlock.”

- Rep. Jeff Flake (R-AZ) [Arizona Republic, 02/19/03]

“Sadly, in the omnibus spending bill funding for these vital government services shared the spotlight with billions in gratuitous pork projects.”

- Rep. John Shadegg [Press Release, 03/06/03]

**"This is the most outrageous pork-barrel bill since I've been in Congress. This omnibus bill spends \$13 billion more than the President's budget request while actually cutting the homeland security request for first responders' training and equipment by \$456 million."**

- Rep. Jim Ramstad [Press Release, 02/13/03]

**"Annual end-of-year struggles to pass spending bills, the folding of multiple appropriations into huge, porky omnibus spending bills, the threat of government shutdowns - all this, as Bush says, looks messy to the public. In fact, it is messy."**

- Roll Call Editorial [6/12/00]

**"Putting a bill together to fund the eight remaining appropriations bills is a tremendous task, but frankly not many tough decisions were made in this Omnibus Bill. Instead, what was decided was to spend more money on everything. The President is the checkout clerk and we are buying our way out of town...That is no way to govern. We are setting a bad precedent and setting the stage for more increases in spending next year and the year after."**

- Rep. Mike Castle [CR, 10/20/98]

**"We had a House rule which says that we ought to have 3 days to review any omnibus bill like this. We are given a couple of hours. We waived that provision. We should not have.... We should not do business like this. It should not be done."**

- Rep. Jeff Flake (R-AZ) [CR, 02/13/03]

**"It will be impossible to pass Labor-HHS and VA-HUD bills. It gets us in the same box again. I thought that last year's omnibus bill was entirely irresponsible."**

- Rep. Michael Castle [The Hill, 05/19/99]

**"Frankly, I would like to do a lot more. I would like to get all of the pork, all of these pork barrel projects that are not emergency, out of the bill. But lo and behold when I get home at night, as I did last night, and I turn on C-Span, it is really a big bazaar. It is Members of Congress in the House or the Senate, it does not matter which party, trading projects back and forth, back and forth."**

- Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI) [CR, 05/13/99]

**"We can do the appropriations process the hard way, sink bills with impossible riders or amendments; fight among ourselves about difficult issues that should be addressed through the authorizing process; get into a public relations war with the president over who is responsible for shutting down the government; and stay in session well into November or later to complete the bills. Or, we can do it the responsible way: Pass the bills on time; leave major policy development to the authorizing committees; reassure the American public that we can govern effectively by keeping the government up and running; claim victory for saving taxpayers' dollars and terminating wasteful programs; and finish the session on a winning note. It is my hope that we chose the responsible way."**

- Rep. Bob Livingston [Roll Call, 09/27/97]